



The Washington Department of Health (DOH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have issued warnings about eating certain kinds of fish because of high levels of mercury.

Advice on eating fish

DOH advises women of childbearing age and children under six:

- Do not eat any shark, swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel or fresh or frozen tuna steaks.
- Limit the amount of tuna you eat, based on your body weight:
 - Women over 135 lbs. should eat no more than one can per week (6 oz)
 - Women under 135 lbs. should eat less than a can per week
 - Children under six should eat less than one half can per week (3 oz)
 - Children under 20 lbs. should eat no more than one ounce per week

Why is mercury harmful?

Mercury can damage a brain that is just starting to grow. This is why babies and young children are most at risk. Also, pregnant women should limit fish consumption to protect their unborn babies.

Should I stop eating all fish?

NO! Fish is a healthy food. It is often low cost and easy-to-prepare. Fish can be a good part of a balanced diet.

What about breastfeeding?

The benefits of breastfeeding far outweigh any risks to your baby. Simply follow the body weight guidelines above in your consumption of these kinds of fish.

How about salmon or fish sticks?

Most species of salmon have very low levels of mercury and are safe to eat. Fish sticks are also fine as long as they aren't made from shark, swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel or tuna. Read the label but generally fish sticks aren't made from these types of fish.

Is one kind of tuna better than another?

Choose "chunk light" or "chunk" tuna. They have less mercury than "solid white" or "chunk white."